BrewFinder
Your Names Here

Mission Statement:

Give users a convenient place to search for their favorite beers/browse new beers and provide them with detailed information about where they can purchase it, while also providing breweries/distributors a convenient place to present their available products to potential customers.

Audience:

Our audience is anyone in Ithaca who enjoy beer and are of legal age to consume alcohol. Our audience also includes the breweries and distributors that are featured on the website, who might want to learn about their competition or promote their brands and products to consumers.

Summary Statement:

Our main goal is to give users (individuals in audience) a site to search and browse different beer. The main page will likely be a simple search bar and logo similar to Google. Users can search and click on a beer and should be presented with various locations where this beer is available for purchase, perhaps listing average price and some basic facts about the beer. This includes home brews from local breweries in Ithaca. A browse tab will list the numerous beers if the user doesn't have anything specific in mind. As a secondary goal, we want breweries and distributors to be able to add/update their own information (i.e. Current beer available, hours, prices, etc. depending on what we choose to include). The information would be displayed in association with the organization when the user clicks on a specific beer. This would likely involve having secure accounts for these companies. Database use and interaction will be key in the implementation of all of the above functionality.

Comparative Analysis:

BREWGENE:

One website that is similar to our concept, at least in function, is BrewGene (brewgene.com). When you go to this website's homepage, you see a large instruction sheet that says "RATE BEERS. FIND NEW BEERS. FIND NEW FRIENDS." They also plug their iPhone app on this homepage design. Above this is a small search bar that says "Enter a beer or brewer," and below is a "Beer of the Day" section. Another similar website to this is Untappd (untappd.com).

Some important comparative elements come from the website's search function. When you enter a word into the search bar, a complex set of checkboxes shows up on the top letting the user specify Beer Styles, Brewing Location, and Alcohol Content. Below these boxes, a long list (in page style, with 1, 2, 3… 50) shows every beer or brewer matching the search criteria. Each beer has the beer's picture, name, brewer, type, and includes users' ratings and "similar beers," or beers that people rated highly along with the beer in question.

On the design side, little should be used for our website. BrewGene's design is cluttered, dated, and not user friendly. However, their functionality tells us a lot. From our team's discussions, we don't want to implement the multi-step search function that BrewGene uses. We want a simple search, only by keyword (without cluttering and sprawling checkboxes), that uses simple design suggests words or shows matching items in real time as the user types. Things we can take away from BrewGene's functionality is the way it prompts and implements users—with a sidebar on the homepage, a login process, and opportunities to rate every beer—and the way it not only displays ratings, but uses that information to suggest other beers.

BEND BREWFEST:
We also examined Bend Brewfest's beer explorer (bendbrewfest.com/brews.html). This page shows up with a lot of text at the top, a displeasing opaque box behind the page's content, and a multi-color bar with the different search options: Style, Color, ABV, IBU, and State. If you leave them on the name and not a specific entry, it will search for all beers in that category. Once you use the drop down arrows and hit "Go!", a lightbox-style display list pops up with all matching beers in a table corresponding with the search categories. Each beer's name has a drop down that, when clicked, displays a description of the beer.

Again, little can be taken away from this website design-wise. The opaque box with a detailed image behind it looks cluttered, the search bar is not prominent enough. However, the lightbox is relatively attractive and user friendly—and we could possibly could be implemented for some elements of our design, possibly to display all information when items are clicked. On the functionality side, this is a similar concept to ours, and this is an example of a website that doesn't have users, and where all details and data collection is handled by the team and, most likely, hard coded into the database. This could be a good route for us, for the sake of time and simple design.

CRAFT BEER:
Finally, we looked into CraftBeer.com's "Beer Styles" page (craftbeer.com/beer-styles). This is the website that will give us the most inspiration on the design side. This page immediately shows a simple heading on top and a prominent search bar that has real-time suggested search and a drop down next to it to select overall styles. Below that, as an alternative to that search function, the site has three slider bars for Color (SRM), Bitterness (IBU), and Alcohol (ABV). And below that, as another alternative, they have a handful of styles like Crisp & Clean and Malty & Sweet that you can select radio-style.

The design and functionality of this site are both strong: It is user friendly while robust, and simple while informative. Some of the search functionality will not apply to our site (at least in its current conception), because we are not planning on allowing the user to search for any criteria besides beer name and brewer name. However, the design and functionality of the suggested search and the assisting drop-down is strong, and we can mimic the basic concepts of this in our website. The main design element that we will take inspiration from is their display of items below the search bar. Each beer is displayed in a consistent, simple, yet powerful design, and it has interactive design elements for hovering and clicking. Each item is a hyperlink to its own

page with interesting and well-laid out details—but we might have this element incorporated through a lightbox, or some element not taking the user away from our main page.

Personas, Use-Cases and Storyboards:

David is a recently turned twenty-one year old who knows very little about the beer scene in the Ithaca area, but would like to try as much and as many different things as he can get his hands on. Enter BrewFinder, a potential solution to David's search woes. The application would allow him to see what is in stock at the local bottle-shops and taprooms, therefore providing the information he needs in order to get the most out of his shopping trips and bar-hopping adventures. David's journey would start with a visit to the BrewFinder search/splash page where he would be able to enter what he is looking for or a business location he is hoping to visit. Let's say that he is on and IPA binge this week, only going after India Pale Ales and related beers, so he would type in India Pale Ale, or IPA, there city/area he is searching in(Ithaca) and the distance from that city/area he would be willing to travel to(15 miles), and hit search. The results would appear below the search bar and would be the different types of IPA's currently in the BrewFinder database. Clicking on a result(in this case a specific beer), would open a dropdown telling about that particular beer and containing a second dropdown containing locations where that beer is stocked and sold within 15 miles of the Ithaca area.

Alexis is a 35 year old marketing and distribution manager at a new startup brewery and taproom, Cayuga Brewing Company. She is constantly on the lookout for ways to promote the fledgling company's products and get their name out in the community. One day a marketing contact tells her about the new hit web application called BrewFinder. Intrigued, Alexis takes some time to check out the site and possibly create an account for Cayuga Brewing's taproom on there. From the search/splash opening page it becomes apparent that BrewFinder is quite user-centric, but wait! In the upper corner is a subtle Login/Create account button. Clicking that takes Alexis to a new page where the option to login is given and below that a button to "Create a new Account." Deciding to create the account and see how much of a potential the site has, Alexis continues. The account creation page is straight forward, with account username, password and business information fields(name, physical address hours of operation, etc). After creating the account, Alexis is prompted to log in. After logging in she is presented with the options to edit her account information(ie if business hours change or the address is changed) add products to the business's active site listings. Liking the system thus far, Alexis enters the information for the brewery's two current flagship beers. The "add a beer" form is a simple yet elegant pop-up that asks for the Beer name, its style(an open-ended field to accommodate for experimental beers or never before seen styles), the brewery that created the beer, its listed ABV and an optional field for IBU's(International Bittering Units), with a submit and a cancel button at the bottom of the popup. With some beers entered into the system, Cayuga Brewing Company is now on the BrewFinder database!

Robert is a 30 year old man who inherited his father's business Beer Central Station several years before. As a new business owner, Robert was approached regarding being one of the pilot bottle-shops for a new web application called BrewFinder. It has been a few months since Robert signed up his business on the service and he needs to update his beer listings as
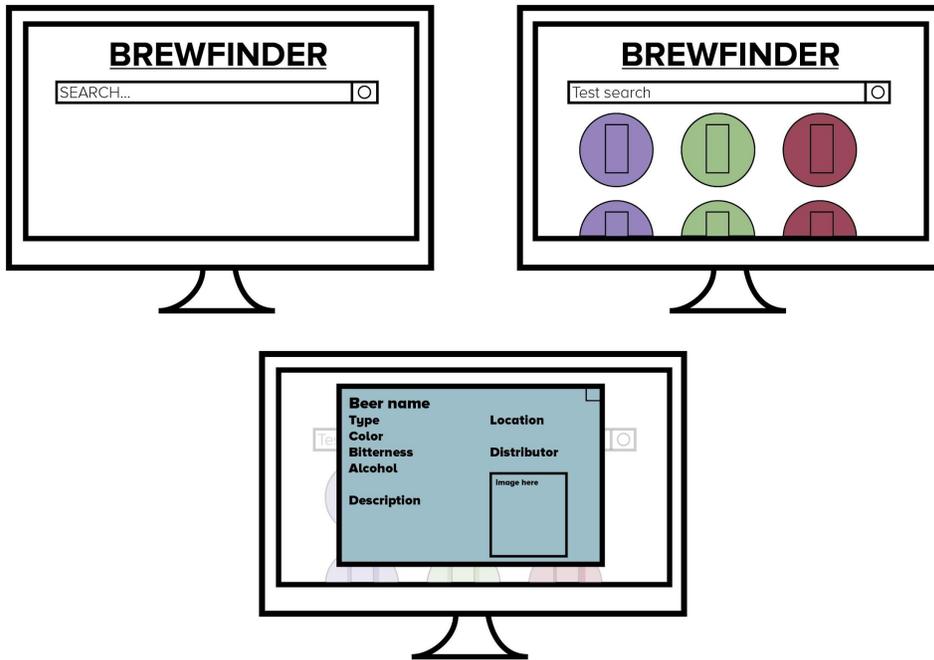
he has run out of stock of several seasonal products from different local breweries. Logging into his account, Robert is immediately presented with a list of the beers currently on file for his business. On each listing is an option to edit, deactivate(an option for unknown lengths of time for being out of stock of a product, without having to remake the listing), or outright delete. Deactivating several options is a breeze and whilst doing so, Robert realizes that he accidentally entered a duplicate listing of a product so he deletes it, after confirmation. After deactivating, the listings now have the options to edit, delete, or re-activate. With his work now done, Robert logs out and goes on with his day.

Views:

View the First: The splash page for the site, it is simplistic with a main search field, with a smaller location field and a radius dropdown in line below it and a large search button below those centered in the page. In the upper corner is a subtle button to Log-in / Create an Account(takes user to different page). Search results, if/when generated, would be displayed below the search fields, with the space above the fields shrinking to allow for more display space. Results would be separate boxes, each box being a different result, displaying basic information in the box and advanced information when clicked(causing the box to drop-down expand to display). This is the view that David would become most familiar with as a potential frequent visitor to the site.

View the Second: The main page for account holders after they sign in(home->login screen->account view page). At the top would be the options to edit the business's listed information (displayed at the very top of the page)and the option to log-out. Below those options would be a scroll box containing all products that that account has entered into the site, with active ones being normal colored and inactive ones being greyed out. This is the view that Alexis and Robert would see upon initial log-in to the site.

View the Third: The account creation page is a page that most users will only have to see once, so as a result should be very polished as it most of those users seeing the page will be new and wanting to use the site's services. Account creation is a well styled form accessed from a button on the log-in screen(home->login screen->account creation). The ease of use and ability to edit much of the information after the account is created(only username, password, business name and physical address fields are 100% required, leaving hours as an optional field) make total time on this page quite minimal, allowing new users to get started as quickly as possible.

BREWFINDER

SEARCH... ○

BREWFINDER

Test search ○

Beer name
Type   Location
Color
Bitterness   Distributor
Alcohol

                Image here
Description

WireFrames:

ACCOUNT
CREATION

Username:
Confirm:
Password:
Confirm:
Email:
Submit

ACCOUNT
CREATION

Confirm acount

We've emailed you a confirmation
code. Input it here to confirm your
account!

ACCOUNT
CREATION

Create a post!

Enter your beer's information
below and we'll filter it into our
system.

Name:
Brewery:
Type:
Description:
Submit